

**Remarks**

**A. Pending Claims**

Claims 1-14 and 32 are pending. Claims 15, 20, 22-25 and 27-31 have been canceled. Claims 1-14 have been amended for clarification. Claim 32 is new. Support for claim 32 is found in original claim 1.

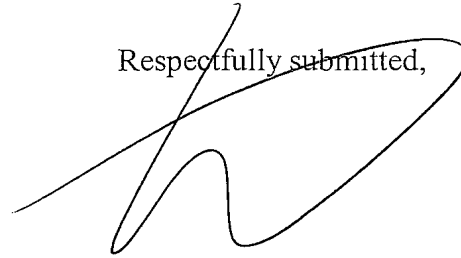
Applicant hereby elects the claims of Group I, namely claims 1-14 and 32, without traverse. Claim 32 reads on Group I. Applicant reserves the right to file a divisional application at a later date capturing the subject matter recited in claims 15, 20, 22-25 and 27-31.

The combination of features of claims 1 and 32 including, but not limited to, the features of: “an organically intercalated swellable inorganic layered material which has been surface coated in a dry process with a pre-exfoliating additive or additive mixture” do not appear to be taught or suggested by International Publication Nos. WO 97/31873 to Dennis et al. WO 97/30950 to Gonzales et al., WO 02/100936 to Dias et al., WO 01/40369 to Bagrodia et al. and WO 00/78540 to Sing et al.

**B. Additional Remarks**

Applicant believes no fees are due with the filing of this response. If any extension of time is required, Applicant hereby requests the appropriate extension of time. If any fees are due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to deduct said fees from Meyertons, Hood, Kivlin, Kowert & Goetzel, P.C. Deposit Account No. 50-1505/5628-26316/EBM.

Respectfully submitted,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'E. Meyertons', written over the text 'Respectfully submitted,'.

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